

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

Mr. Tolson

DATE: May 28, 1968

C. D. DeLoach

SUBJECT: DREW PEARSON - JACK ANDERSON COLUMN
REGARDING MARTIN LUTHER KING
WASHINGTON POST EDITION OF MAY 24, 1968

By memorandum of May 27, 1968, the Attorney General indicated that he is deeply troubled by the Drew Pearson - Jack Anderson column in "The Washington Post" of May 24, 1968, which dealt with the FBI's electronic surveillance coverage of Dr. Martin Luther King, as requested and approved by former Attorney General Kennedy.

The Attorney General noted that a portion of this column must have come from secret documents, the contents of which were known to only a very few people in the office of the Director and in the office of the Attorney General. He stated that the disclosure of these facts in the public press evidences a lack of integrity in the Department's system or in the personnel employed at some relevant time in his office and the Director's office. He requests advice on any information as to the manner in which these facts were disclosed, or any theory how such data may have been released. If no such information is available, he requests that an investigation be undertaken, if the Director deems such an inquiry feasible, to determine how this release occurred.

Attached is a letter to the Attorney General providing a reply in this matter. The Attorney General is advised the FBI has made a thorough analysis of the captioned article and has made a careful check of our FBI officials who normally handle contacts with the press. The Attorney General is assured that no officials of this Bureau were responsible in any way in furnishing information to Pearson which formed the basis for this article. It points out that the information in question could have originated from a fairly wide range of sources in that information regarding our electronic surveillance coverage of King received wide dissemination in the Government, including the Attorney General's Office, the Solicitor General's Office, the White House, the Vice President's Office, military intelligence agencies, and the Central Intelligence

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Memorandum to Mr. Tolson
Re: Drew Pearson - Jack Anderson Column
Regarding Martin Luther King
Washington Post Edition of May 24, 1968

Agency. This letter also notes that such coverage of King has previously been alluded to on a number of occasions by the press, including a column by "Washington Post" writer Richard E. Howard (February 25, 1968), in addition to other press coverage.

In connection with the appearance of the date July 16, 1968, in captioned article, as the date on which Kennedy first instructed the FBI to conduct wiretap coverage of King, the Attorney General's attention is drawn to the fact that a number of individuals outside the FBI were familiar with this request. Some of these would include Courtney Evans, who received Kennedy's instructions in this matter, various Departmental officials who were at that time aware of Kennedy's interest in having the FBI institute this coverage of King, the Solicitor General, who was recently briefed by the Director concerning our electronic coverage of King, and certain current Departmental officials who were completely briefed by representatives of this Bureau regarding Kennedy's authorization of electronic surveillance coverage, in connection with a discussion of the possible use of a plea of immunity in the civil suit in Las Vegas against FBI Agents.

The Attorney General is told that the FBI will be glad to initiate investigation if he so desires. His attention is called to the fact that any investigation of this type would naturally entail interviews with all possible sources from which the data in question could have originated, including representatives of his office, the Solicitor General's Office, the White House, the Central Intelligence Agency, and various other departments and agencies.

ACTION:

Attached for approval is a letter to the Attorney General along the lines described above. Attached to the yellow of this letter are copies of pertinent documents in support of facts stated to the Attorney General.

V. *[Signature]* *[Signature]*

[Signature]

[Signature]